

## **EASTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2012
<b>Application Number</b>	E/2011/0896/LBC
<b>Site Address</b>	Southcott Manor, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5JF
<b>Proposal</b>	Part demolition of existing building including double garage and new extensions and alterations.
<b>Applicant</b>	Mr & Mrs R Middleton
<b>Town/Parish Council</b>	PEWSEY
<b>Grid Ref</b>	416990 159387
<b>Type of application</b>	Listed Building Consent
<b>Case Officer</b>	April Waterman

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### **Reason for the application being considered by Committee**

This application, and its sister application for planning permission, have been called to committee by the Division Member, Cllr Kunkler.

### **1. Purpose of Report**

To consider the recommendation to refuse the application for Listed Building Consent.

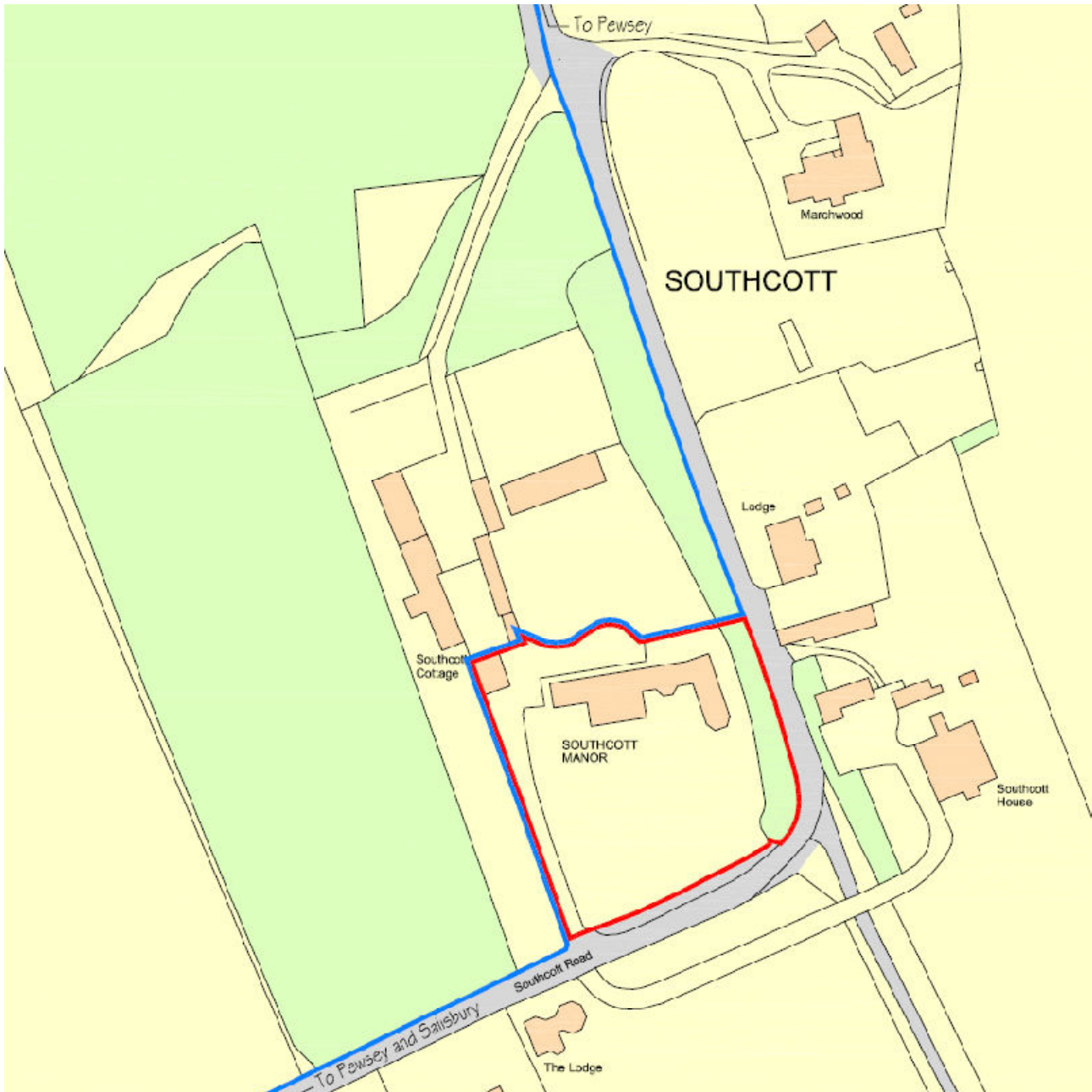
### **2. Report Summary**

Listed Building Consent is sought for the partial demolition, reconfiguration and extension of this Grade II Listed Building. As a result of the degree of loss of historic fabric and of the scale and design of the extensions, the proposed works are considered to be unjustified and unacceptable in terms of the impact on the heritage significance of the asset.

### **3. Site Description**

Southcott Manor is a Grade II Listed early C19 farmhouse located in the open countryside about 1km to the south east of the centre of Pewsey, served off Green Drove, and bounded to the east by Southcott Road. The site lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, on relatively flat land in the Pewsey Vale floor.

Other residential and agricultural development is grouped loosely along these roads.



The property comprises the principal house, together with a collection of buildings including an enlarged cottage, a timber framed thatched former threshing barn and further domestic and agricultural outbuildings. Land associated with the manor is used for garden and orchard/ agricultural purposes.

The original house is orientated with its main rooms presenting to the south, overlooking gardens. The driveway now serving the property brings vehicles to the garage and parking areas to the immediate north west and north of the house, and the most used entry into the house is now on the north side, rather than through the main porch on the south face of the building.

The house as it now stands comprises a central two storey block, almost square in form, with a ground floor modern wing to the east, and a narrow two storey service wing to the west. The different scales, forms, designs and detailing of the two existing wings are clearly identifiable from the original central four-room-and-central-passage plan house, especially from the south, where the integrity of this core structure is best appreciated.

The current west wing incorporates elements of earlier structures (a dairy) and although it has undergone much change, evidence of each stage of its evolution (and therefore the history of the overall building) is retained in the existing structure.

#### **4. Planning History**

E/2011/0895/FUL	Part demolition of existing building including double garage and new extensions and alterations.
K/45176/L	Replacement of existing conservatory with new larger one.
K/45177	Replacement of existing conservatory with new larger one.
K/13069	Single storey extension housing swimming pool and amenities.
K/86/1239	New conservatory and extensions to stable block
E/11/0408/LBC	Erection of orangery (Southcott Cottage).

Pre-application advice relating to the extension of the building was provided to the applicants by the Conservation Officer in March 2011. This advice was, in general, not supportive of further extension to the principal Listed Building.

#### **5. The Proposal**

The proposals for which Listed Building Consent is sought have been amended since first submission, as discussion between the applicant, agent and your officers has taken place in an attempt to resolve problems identified with the scheme. Notwithstanding these discussions, the proposals still comprise the partial demolition, reconfiguration and extension of the house, and the removal of roughcast render from the building and its replacement with a smooth lime render. Listed Building Consent is also sought for the demolition of a double garage.

The existing accommodation comprises a kitchen, lounge, dining room, drawing room, two utility rooms, front and rear halls retaining the through passage route, main and back stairs, conservatory, sauna, changing room, two downstairs W.C.s and enclosed swimming pool. The first floor of the main house has been altered from its original four bedroom and landing layout to show three bedrooms and two bathrooms, with a fourth bedroom and third bathroom in the connected first floor section of the west wing.

The application initially sought permission to provide a six bedroomed house by the following alterations and extensions:

- the removal of the upper floor area of the main house above part of the rear hall and existing drawing room to show a galleried dining space, including a new main curved staircase;
- the blocking of the through passage hallway and the insertion of a cloakroom with W.C.;
- the provision of three bedrooms and one bathroom within the remaining first floor of the original house;
- replacement of the single storey east wing (except for a section of the north wall) to form a two storey block with games room and kitchenette (with retention of the swimming pool building beyond), and two new bedrooms, four new bathrooms and a laundry on its first floor;
- demolition of the west wing (again, with the exception of parts of its north and west walls) and replacement with a two storey and further single storey extension to provide a kitchen/breakfast/family room, a sub-kitchen, a pantry, a utility room, a boot room and a W.C. on the ground floor, with a master bedroom, dressing room and en-suite bathroom

above. Quartered windows in the retained north wall of the existing structure are proposed to be replaced with small paned “Georgian” style windows in altered openings.

Amendments to the scheme comprise:

- the retention/re-instatement of the four-room plan on both ground and first floors of the original house, accommodating a dining room, drawing room, study and snug on the ground floor, with three bedrooms, a bathroom, and the dressing room to serve the master suite on the first floor;
- a two storey (largely replacement) extension on the west side to provide a master bedroom and bathroom only at first floor level, still with kitchen/breakfast/family room below;
- a two storey (largely replacement) extension on the east side to provide only two further bedrooms and two bathrooms at first floor level, and games room below (i.e. still six bedrooms in all);
- the setting back of the proposed ground and first floor east wing by 2.3 metres from the south facade of the original house;
- the setting back of the ground floor of the west wing extension by 0.8 metres from the south facade of the original house, with the first floor element being set back by 2.3 metres.

In essence, the revised proposals differ from the initial submission by a reworking of proposals in the central house and a slight reduction in the overall size of the extensions. This has resulted in the omission of the new curved staircase and galleried dining space, two upstairs bathrooms, a sub-kitchen and a kitchenette. The depth of the wings has been reduced, with a slight shortening of the length of the east wing only.

The degree of demolition of the existing west side structures has not changed, and the proposed replacement of existing windows on the north elevation of the west wing is also not altered. The ridge and eaves levels of the proposed wings are also not altered, each being shown as only 0.4 metres and 0.25 metres below the corresponding ridge and eaves levels of the main house. The removal of the roughcast render and its replacement with a smooth finish render is still proposed.

## 6. Planning Policy

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

National Policy contained in PPS5 ‘Planning for the historic environment’.

## 7. Consultations

**Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer** (Comments on initial submission):

In pre-application advice given in March 2011, the following was conveyed to the applicant:

*“...our preliminary advice to owners is to ensure that the current level of accommodation suits their needs as no extension to a listed building can be guaranteed....additional accommodation may be desired but this is not sufficient justification for the proposals to extend a listed building and current government policy requires additional supporting information to establish the case of whether the building is redundant in its current form. Current Government policy PPS5: HE9.3 states that local planning authorities require the applicant to provide evidence that other potential owners or users of the site have been sought through appropriate marketing and that reasonable endeavours have been made to seek grant funding for the heritage assets’ conservation. This would prove the redundancy of the building in its current form before any extension to the building will be considered,*

*although it certainly does not expect people to actually sell their property, but merely to establish the current level of interest in it in its current form....*

*... it would appear that successfully extending the house without impacting on the special interest of the building may be difficult to achieve, due to the fact that the building has been extended in the past. Notwithstanding the desirability of additional accommodation, any proposals to alter or extend a listed building must be fully justified (in terms of their impact on the listed building, its fabric and setting) and I am therefore unable to see what convincing justification could be given for further extension to the property.”*

Despite this initial advice, no more information was received for further advice, and an application for significant proposals to the protected building has been submitted.

Objection is raised to the scheme on a number of counts:

#### Demolition of dairy/servants' wing:

The loss of this historic part of the building would remove evidence of the evolution of the house, and its function. This building provides a working entrance to the house from the farm, along with a less formal or servants' access to the first floor, and the lower status of this part of the house is differentiated from the main core by the style and rhythm of its windows. The proposal to lose this part of the house is deemed to be harmful to the listed building and is therefore an unacceptable loss to the significance of the designated heritage asset. With no convincing justification for it being submitted, the proposal is contrary to PPS5 Policy HE9.1.

#### Proposed two two-storey extensions:

The building already offers a large amount of living accommodation over two storeys and no need has been demonstrated that it is necessary to enlarge it further to retain its function as a dwelling house. The proposed extensions are extremely large in relation to the proportions of the original house, require demolition of important parts of the house in order to be implemented and dominate the historic house in overall size and location.

The main house has been given an elegant setting, with a formal south entrance porch and grounds, which differentiate the house from the working farm buildings. The proposed extensions provide the house with 'wings', being two storeys approaching similar ridge heights and depth/footprint to the historic building. These are deemed to be detrimental additions, as they dominate the main house, almost losing it as it appears to be consumed by the proposed wings.

As stated at pre-application stage, any proposals to alter or extend a listed building must be fully justified (in terms of their impact on the listed building, its fabric and setting). Nothing convincing has been put forward that outweighs the substantial harm caused to the listed building. Additional accommodation may be desired but this is not sufficient justification for the proposals to extend a listed building and current government policy requires additional supporting information to establish the case of whether the building is redundant in its current form (which clearly it is not). There is no need for the additional space, as the building is currently functioning as a habitable dwelling. The extensions proposed would erode the historic identity of the manor house, much to its detriment, causing significant harm to its special interest and its setting.

#### Internal alterations

West wing – comments above

#### Main house ground floor:

The reinstatement of the dividing wall between the existing kitchen and dining room is welcomed: it reinstates the historic floor plan of the house. Other alterations proposed for the ground floor, however, combine to have a detrimental impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset. The loss of the through passage from the original front door and rear door/hallway disrupts the historic plan form of the building, which is a defining feature of this building type. The loss of a presumed load bearing wall between the rear hall and the drawing room is also unacceptable interference with and loss of the historic plan form of the building.

The removal of the ceiling and floor to create a new staircase and access to the first floor is also a highly damaging alteration to this listed building and the justification for this work is unconvincing for such major structural intervention into the building.

#### First Floor:

The alterations to the first floor, which include altering/blocking/creating doorways, creating a room on the landing area, which result in a significantly altered plan are also damaging to the building's special interest.

Generally the blocking and/or relocating of doorways (on both floors) are unnecessary alterations to the listed building – current guidance does not support the blocking of historic openings and these should be retained, complete with door, frame, fittings etc, in situ but locked or fixed shut if no longer in use.

Overall, the extent and nature of the proposed internal alterations are substantial to the point they have a highly negative impact on the listed building and its fabric. The majority of the alterations are highly invasive and although they may be desired, they are not necessary to retain the use of this building as a habitable dwelling.

#### External alterations

Removal of render – it is proposed to remove the roughcast render and replace this with smooth lime render. These works would be considerable, given the size of the building, and is not deemed to be necessary work to the building. No convincing justification for the change in render has been provided, the building does not appear to be suffering with damp and the render appears to be in a good state of repair: as the replacement of the render is deemed unnecessary intervention into the building's fabric, the proposal is unacceptable.

The alterations to window arrangements for the retained north elevation of the dairy/servants' quarter are not acceptable. The form and function of the two distinct parts of the historic building are differentiated by the style and rhythm of the windows, which are important and defining features of the former dairy: this difference therefore should be retained.

#### Demolition of existing garage and erection of new wall

The garage is an inter-war structure of little importance to the site as a whole. It is proposed to demolish this building: the loss is not deemed to impact on the significance of the listed building or its setting and there are no objections to this proposal.

#### Lack of justification set out in the Heritage Statement of the Design and Access Statement

Policy HE9.1 states that 'there should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated assets.....Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.' The Design & Access Statement attempts to justify the proposals but the arguments presented do not provide a clear and convincing justification for such significant and highly invasive works to the listed building and therefore this does not comply with the requirement of PPS5.

#### Summary

The demolition, extensions and the extent of internal alterations proposed for this listed building are unacceptable as they are deemed to result in substantial harm to the designated heritage asset and its setting, which is contrary to PPS5 Policy HE9.

#### ***Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer (comments on revised plans):***

The objection is repeated. While some amendments to the proposals are welcome, overall the scheme is still too similar to the initial proposals, with changes not being radical enough to negate the concerns raised over the loss of historic fabric, the dilution of evidence within the building of its evolution, and the impact of the scale and design of the wings.

**English Heritage** (comments on initial submission):

We consider that the cumulative impact of the proposed works would have an adverse impact on the significance of the heritage asset and there is not sufficient justification for the works. The works would be contrary to PPS 5 and we recommend that the Council seeks revisions to the scheme or refuses to issue consent.

The application is accompanied by an historic building record which provides useful background facts on the evolution of the building and the heritage statement provides some analysis of the impact of the changes that have taken place. The area where the heritage statement could be enhanced is its assessment of the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the asset.

There are a number of aspects of the proposal which do raise significant concerns. Whilst we appreciate the reinstatement of the wall between the existing kitchen and drawing room will restore some of the ground floor plan, the extent of proposed change elsewhere negates this benefit. The removal of the wall in the hall and substantial area of floor in order to introduce a grand staircase will alter the plan form and character of the building. The closure of access to the existing staircase and introduction of a cloakroom at ground floor level would compromise its use and importance in relation to the rest of the house. The change in the circulation route also involves changing the door positions in the two southern bedrooms to beside the chimney breasts which is an odd architectural arrangement. The addition of the wings also involves new openings in the original outside walls of the house, at first floor level. The works appear to include almost total demolition of the dairy/service wing. Whilst this is a later addition it was constructed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and shows the evolution of the house and has evidential and historical value. The accompanying heritage statement does not appear to adequately address the impact of the proposed works on the historic fabric and floor plan of the house.

The link to the swimming pool is a recent addition and is not considered of any inherent interest and therefore its removal is not contentious. As stated above the demolition of the dairy wing is a major intervention into the historic fabric. The scale of the proposed extensions also raises issues. The south elevation was originally the principal approach to the house. The dairy wing and the more recent swimming pool link do have a visual impact on the overall aesthetic value of the building however there is some mitigation in terms of the garden front of the building as they appear more subservient due to being set back from the front building line or single storey. The proposed new wings will be two storey and of similar building line (footprint) to the existing house. If built the difference in ridge and eaves height between the house and new wings would not be perceived to be significantly deferential to the main house. We are of the view that the new wings would dominate the existing building. It is the height and bulk which [are] the principal issues as the design mainly follows the original form. Although it is considered that the proposed bi-folding doors will be a rather incongruous feature in terms of scale and detail. This is contrary to the advice in paragraph 178 of the Practice Guide which states "It would not normally be acceptable for new work to dominate the original asset or its setting in either scale, material or as a result of its siting".

Whilst we acknowledge the owners' desire to make some amendments to the bathroom layouts and some of the internal arrangements we are of the view that these works would have a harmful impact on the significance of the house. We are unconvinced that the house requires such major change in order to provide a family house for the present day.

**Recommendation:**

We are of the view that the proposals would have an adverse impact and [cause] harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset and are contrary to the policies in PPS 5 and the accompanying we recommend that the Council seeks major amendments or refuses the application.

### **English Heritage** (*comments on revised plans*):

We note that the revised application shows some changes in line with our previous advice. The total removal of the hall wall, the introduction of a new staircase and closing off the main staircase have all now been omitted from the scheme which is welcomed. Although, it would be preferable too if the scheme retained more of the hall wall.

The scheme still proposes major demolition of the 19th century service wing which has evidential and historic value of the evolution of the house. In particular, the demolition of the rear wall at first floor level appears unjustified. The existing first floor of the wing already has a bedroom and bathroom and it may be possible to reconfigure these spaces to provide an enhanced space for the new master bedroom.

We question the design rationale and conservation philosophy of replacing Victorian windows in the Victorian section of the building with new Georgian style windows.

We suggest that the Council seeks further amendments to the scheme to limit the adverse impact on the significance of this listed building.

### **English Heritage Recommendation**

We urge you to address the above issues, and recommend that this application be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your expert conservation advice. It is not necessary for us to be consulted again. If you feel you need further advice, please let us know why.

Please re-consult us if there are material changes to the proposals beyond those necessary to address the issues we have raised. We will then consider whether such changes might lead us to object. If they do, and if your authority is minded to grant consent, you should notify the Secretary of State of this application in accordance with Circular 08/2009.

**Parish Council:** Support.

## **8. Publicity**

The application was advertised by site notice and by notice in the local press. No public comments have been received.

## **9. Assessment of the case**

The only consideration to be taken into account in the determination of this application for Listed Building Consent is the impact of the proposed works on the significance and integrity of the designated heritage asset. The requirements of section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, and national government guidance comprised within PPS 5 – Planning for the historic environment (together with its accompanying Practice Note) are the relevant documents against which to test the application.

As a result of your officers' own assessments of the initial proposals, and in the light of the objections received from English Heritage, lengthy discussions were held with the applicant and agent to explore whether and how a scheme of works could be devised that would achieve the applicants' desired accommodation **and** ensure that the integrity and significance of the designated heritage asset would be sustained. While some revisions that have been made to the proposals are welcomed, the amount of demolition of and change to the existing west wing structure has hardly been revised from that indicated in the initial submission. Furthermore, the reductions in size of the extensions are not enough to avoid the adverse impacts described in both the English Heritage and Conservation Officer's initial comments. On these counts, therefore, and on other matters raised that have not been addressed, the proposals remain unacceptable.



## **10. Conclusion**

Notwithstanding the amendments that have been made to the proposed works, the proposals would cause harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Listed Building Consent be REFUSED for the following reason:**

The proposed works would comprise the removal of a substantial amount of historic fabric from the heritage asset, and the loss of evidence in terms of the evolution of the building, which would diminish greatly its significance architecturally and historically. Furthermore, the proposed works to construct two two-storey wings on the east and west sides of the main C19th core of the house would be harmful to its character, integrity and primacy. The proposed works to the house would neither preserve nor enhance the designated heritage asset, and no justification for implementing such works has been demonstrated. The scheme would be contrary to the advice contained within PPS 5 and its Practice Guide, therefore.

Note: In the event of the committee being minded to approve the Listed Building Consent application against the advice of English Heritage, the matter will need to be referred to the Secretary of State, who will then make a decision on whether to call the application in for his own determination.

**Appendices:**

None

**Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:**

Application files, PPS 5 and its accompanying Practice Guide.